19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

805

ENGLISH	KAREN	TRANSLATION
Sunday	*Li naw*	The eagle's beak
Monday	*Htaw meh*	The long tooth
Tuesday	*To mü*	The slanting sun
Wednesday	*To kyaw*	The leaning oil tree
Thursday	*Thi thwa*	The big comb
Friday	*Mü daw hpa*	The divided sun day
Saturday	*Mü htaw k' hpu*	The pig's stomach day

I have found no traditions or other information relating to these names.

The Karen divide the day into the following seven parts or subdivisions: (1) *mü hse wah taw*, dawn; (2) *mü heh htaw*, sunrise; (3) *mü heh htaw hpa htaw*, the sun is high; (4) *mü htu*, noon; (5) *mü xe law*, the sun declines; (6) *mü haw law*, evening, and (7) *mü law nü*, sunset. The night also has its divisions, such as *mü yaw ma*, meaning that the sun is deep down; *hpa hpaw mü*, midnight or literally midway between the suns, and *hsaw o*, cock crow or early morning, of which they distinguish three stages. In conversation a Karen indicates the time of day or night by pointing to the sun's position as it was at the time to which he is referring, pointing upward or downward as the occasion requires. More than once in the narration of some story I have heard the different members of a group dispute about the exact angle at which the sun stood when the incident occurred, the difference between the angles indicated being not more than a degree.

MEASUREMENT OF SPACE

804

When a Karen speaks of some object, he is likely to indicate its size by comparing it with some part of his person. For example, he will describe a bamboo as being as large around as his arm, or the limb of a tree as being the size of his thigh. Applying the same principle, he has devised a system of rough units of measurement, such as the length of the forefinger, called *t' sü mü*; the distance between the end of the thumb and the end of the forefinger, *t'hpi;* the distance between the end of the thumb and the knuckle of the little finger when the fist is doubled up, *t'so;* the interval between the end of the thumb and the end of the middle finger, *t' hta;* the cubit or the distance from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger, *t' pla*, and the reach of the outstretched arm, *t' hkli*. Inasmuch as

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

291

TWO SGAW KAREN MAIDENS

One from Tharrawaddy and the other from Tavoy District. The Tavoy girl (on the right) is wearing a smock made of black velvet purchased in a bazaar and trimmed with embroidery of colored yarns. She also has on a head-band such as is worn in that district.

804 all of these units of measurement vary with the size and proportions of the individual, allowance is generally made for such variations. The cubit is commonly employed in all building operations, and men with long arms make the proper correction by measuring from the elbow to the first joint instead of to the tip of the middle finger. Contrariwise, small men add to their cubit the width of a finger or more to bring it to the standard length of a half-yard, which it is nowadays made to equal.

Measurements for longer or shorter distances are specified in relative terms, borrowed from one form or another of physical exertion. Such measurements are: the pace, *t'hka*; the stone's throw, *t' kwi leu*; a call (that is, as far as one can hear a shout), *t' kaw*. An indefinite distance of a mile or two, which one might

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

walk without stopping, is a stage, *t' taw leh;* a half-day's journey, *t' n.ā htu leh*; a day's journey, *t' ni leh*, and so on. The Karen may on occasion speak of a month's or a year's journey to very distant places. Another method of designating distances by intervals of time during which physical effort is required is to specify the number of betel chews or quids that would be consumed during the trip. For instance, a Karen is apt to inform one that a certain village is three or four betel chews distant. As it requires from fifteen to twenty minutes to dispose of a quid of betel, the village in question may be estimated as being three or four miles away.

The Karen's Knowledge of Astronomy

It often happens that the Karen find their way through the jungle at night by means of the stars. The more brilliant constellations, called *hsa t' so*, are well known and have their particular names. Of these, the Great Bear *(Hsa k' htaw*, literally the Elephant) and the Southern Cross *(Meh la ka)* are referred to the most frequently, because they signify north and south, respectively. These two constellations were supposed, according to an old legend, to have been brothers, being thought to resemble each other in appearance; but on account of a quarrel they separated and went to the opposite ends of the heavens. Orion is known by the name of the Stealthily Shooting Stars *(Hsa kwa hka)*. A legend relating to the three stars of Orion's belt, which are named *Hsa yo ma* (stars that seized wives), recounts that these stars kidnapped the daughters of the Pleiades, which are regarded as the great ones of the heavens. Later the three culprits were caught and reduced to the degraded position of servants to their parents-in-law. The Archer —Sagittarius of the ancients—is called the Bow-head Star *(Hsa hkli hko*, literally, the head of the bow where it is joined to the barrel of the crossbow). The Pleiades are named *Hsa deu mü*, a term signifying a collection of people closely related to one another; while three stars just east of the Pleiades, which look as though they had broken away from the original group, are called *Deu mü law hpa* (those separated from the company). Three stars south of the Pleiades, which form a triangle, bear the name of the Loom *(Hsa hta hko)*, because the geometrical figure indicated by their positions suggests that enclosed by the floor, which forms the base; the wall, the vertical side; and the inclined warp, the hypothenuse, of the loom in the living-room of a Karen home. It ought to